

freedom of expression for all. The one thing that unites all the members of this multi-party and divided House is the hope for peace. In the State of Israel lives a nation that yearns for peace, wants peace and is ready to pay a heavy price for peace. At the same time, we remain aware of every danger. Israel does not have the luxury of allowing itself weakness, even for one moment.

Madam Speaker, you have come to a tiny country. We have only seven million citizens. A tiny country that has not known a single day of quiet since its establishment. A tiny country that appreciates, perhaps more than any other country in the world, the efforts of your country to put an end to terrorism.

You have come to a country that observes with both pain and great hope, the efforts of the great United States of America to eradicate the terrorist bases in Iraq, in Afghanistan and in other places.

We, who wake up each morning fearing for our children, we know how difficult it is for you in this just war, and from here, from Jerusalem, we send you our heartfelt blessing for your success and for the success of the free world.

When I met you in Washington a month ago, I invited you to come to visit Israel, and I am glad that you accepted my invitation. During that visit I invited Karnit Goldwasser to join me at our meeting. I saw how moved you were listening to Karnit. I saw how moved you were by the story of our kidnapped soldiers, Gilad Shalit, Eldad Regev, and Ehud Goldwasser.

I am proud to be the daughter of a nation whose ethical code sanctifies the principle that every soldier is everyone's soldier. Every missing soldier is greatly missed by us all and every prisoner of war is a prisoner who it is our duty to bring back home.

The commitment of the Bush administration to the Peace Process in our region is very important and precious for us. As also is the President's deep friendship for Israel. The intensive activity by the Secretary of State, in the spirit of President Bush's policy, is most important, and is part of an ongoing effort by generations of American Administrations.

This is an opportunity to say a big thank you, through you, to Israel's friends in Congress, and to express our appreciation to you and to them for all their many efforts on behalf of Israel and on behalf of regional stability. We are pleased to discover anew each time, that the support for Israel rises above any inter-party dispute in the United States.

Madam Speaker, distinguished Representatives, during your visit here in Israel you will have the opportunity to see personally the exceptional achievements of Israel during its fifty-eight years. Despite no less than ten wars, between which we experienced many horrifying acts of terrorism, we have set up a model country, with a flourishing modern economy, with ground-breaking research centers, dynamic culture and advanced education, welfare and health systems.

Madam Speaker, You bring here to our region a refreshing breeze of hope. Your upcoming visit to Damascus arouses, naturally, a political debate in your country and of course here too.

I believe in your worthy intentions. Perhaps this step—that may at this stage seem unpopular—that you intend to take when you leave here, will make it clear to the Syrian people and to the Syrian leadership, that they must abandon the axis of evil, that they must stop supporting terrorism and giving shelter to the terrorist's command posts, that they must make a real strategic choice that will bring hope to the citizens of Syria and to the citizens of the whole region.

Israel seeks peace; anyone who speaks of peace and displays an honest intention to seek peace will find an ear in Israel.

Sitting with us here this evening is Mrs. Nadia Cohen, whose husband, Eli Cohen, was executed by hanging in Damascus 42 years ago (in 1965). Nadia, and all of Israel, has been asking the Syrian Government for many long years, to allow the removal of Eli Cohen's bones for burial here in Israel. This would be an elementary human gesture. I hope that your visit will enable the President of Syria to finally take the decision that seems so necessary. By this act the Syrian President could indicate to the world and to us that something can nevertheless change.

Madam Speaker, and our distinguished guests, the members of your delegation, you have come here to a small country. We number only seven million citizens, but fourteen million arms are stretched wide open to receive you with a blessing of Shalom [peace] and with the traditional greeting of welcome—"B'ruchim HaBa'im" [Blessed be those who arrive]. Please look upon this House, the Knesset, the principal and primary institution of Israeli democracy, as though it were your House too.

You are our brothers in the legislature and we see you and your fellow Americans as true friends of Israel. We appreciate your contribution to the strengthening of the security and strength of the State of Israel, and feel gratitude to all the American governments over the years.

B'ruchim atem bevo'achem' [May you be blessed on your arrival]. And to all our other guests, who have come here to the Knesset today, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Happy Passover—Festival of Freedom—in the embrace of your families.

ADDRESS OF THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE NANCY PELOSI

Madame Speaker, Members of Knesset, Cabinet Ministers, Supreme Court Justices and Honored Guests. Thank you.

Speaker Itzik, I am deeply honored to accept your invitation to address this great democratic body. I salute you for your achievements as the Knesset's first woman Speaker.

I stand with you tonight, conscious of all that you and I owe to the hopes and dreams of generations of Israeli and American women. I think especially of Golda Meir, the stateswoman, leader, mother, and grandmother whose legacy we both share.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring a message from the House of Representatives—which we call the people's house—to this distinguished body and to the Israeli people.

There is an unshakable bond between America and Israel that grows out of our past and the fundamental values we share. That bond forms the foundation of our efforts for peace, for democracy, for human freedom. The bond between our nations points the way to the future—a democratic Israel at peace with her neighbors. That is essential for the stability that this region desires. And the pioneering, entrepreneurial spirit of both our nations is essential for the future all our citizens deserve.

We remember the oldest roots of our friendship today. We stand here in the City of Jerusalem, a home to the world's three major religions. We stand at the threshold of one of the holiest weeks in the Judeo-Christian calendar. Palm Sunday is ending and Passover is about to begin. In this moment, Jews and Christians alike celebrate the possibility of human redemption from slavery into freedom.

"Open for me the gates of righteousness," we sing in one of the season's best-loved

Psalms, "I will enter and give thanks to God."

The journey toward freedom and peace is a journey of faith, a journey of hope, a journey of a lifetime or more. It is a journey our deepest values command us to undertake.

When Americans look at Israel, we see the hope and promise of that journey. The creation of Israel stands out as one of the greatest achievements of the 20th century, and as a beacon of hope to the world. President Truman's role in recognizing the new state just 11 minutes after its proclamation is a source of pride for Americans.

Forty years ago another American President, John F. Kennedy, summed up what binds Americans to Israel today when he said that Israel "is the child of hope and the home of the brave. It carries the shield of democracy and it honors the sword of freedom."

Americans have many political differences, but we stand united with Israel now and always. One example of that is the bipartisan Congressional delegation here with me tonight. We speak with one voice, in support of a secure Jewish state of Israel living in peace with her neighbors.

Let me take a moment to recognize them: Delegation Co-Chairman David Hobson; Chairman Tom Lantos, with whom I share representation of the great city of San Francisco; Chairman Henry Waxman; Chairman Nick Rahall; Chairwomen Louise Slaughter; Chairman Robert Wexler; and I am especially proud that our delegation includes Congressman Keith Ellison of Minnesota, the first American Muslim elected to Congress.

We are all honored to be here, and we are honored to be with Karnit Goldwasser, who has given the world the priceless gift of her courage. When I met her in Washington last month with Speaker Itzik, I was struck by the fact that she should be enjoying a young marriage but instead is traveling the world for her husband's sake, Ehud Goldwasser.

We are honored to be here with the families of Israel's kidnapped and missing soldiers. We must not forget any of them.

In the last year three more were kidnapped: Ehud Goldwasser, Eldad Regev and Gilad Shalit. I display their identification tags in the Speaker's office, and I carry them with me today. We must not rest until they are home. We will mention this to the president of Syria.

Americans know what it is to be brave in battle, and what it takes to be strong at home. Respect for Israel's courage and strength has bound our nations together since Israel's earliest days—something I remember from my own childhood and the tradition in which I was raised.

In 1947, a ship bound for Tel Aviv set sail from Baltimore, my native city, with a crew of young American volunteers. History remembers this ship as the Exodus 47. Its mission was to bring war survivors from the camps of Europe to live in Israel. It was one of the first times that Americans made Israel's cause our own.

At that time, my father was a Congressman and later Mayor of Baltimore. His support for a Jewish state began when he was one of a small number of Congressmen who lobbied Presidents Roosevelt and Truman first to do more to rescue Jews in Europe and later to support the creation of Israel.

I was fascinated to learn of Israel as a child through the Bible, where God spoke from a burning bush about a magical "land flowing with milk and honey."

I remember vividly learning about the state of Israel when my parents' friends Simon and Irene Sobeloff came home from a visit to Israel shortly after Israel's birth as a nation.

The Sobeloffs visited our home and regaled us with magnificent tales about this glorious